

## PRIORITIZING EMPLOYMENT AND INTRODUCTION TO CAREER PLANNING

### **Overview**

Mission- To expand the Division of Developmental Disabilities system for Individuals to have increased community integrated employment options.

Vision- Employment is a viable option for all Individuals with developmental disabilities.

Beliefs- Individuals who want to work can work and those that are of working age are expected to work and have the right to achieve their career goals. Individuals earn prevailing wage and have the opportunity to realize economic self sufficiency.

Employment services & supports will be addressed in each individual service plan (ISP). Community competitive employment supports is the first service option offered. Employment supports will be based on individual need.

Each individual will be supported to pursue his or her own unique path to work, a career, or his or her contribution to/participation in community life. All individuals, regardless of the challenge of their disability, will be afforded an opportunity to pursue competitive employment. Career planning, including job exploration, is critical when assisting individuals in making informed choices about their future careers.

The guiding principles are as follows:

- Individuals who want to work can work
- Individuals have the opportunity to explore career options
- Individuals earn a prevailing wage
- Individuals are actively supported throughout the process of making major lifestyle changes, including career development & advancement

Best practices that should be considered by the support coordinator (formally known as service coordinator) in regards to employment are:

- Current practice is to presume Individuals employable. Presuming means Individuals can work! The Rehabilitation Act of 1992 has been a major force in the shift towards believing everyone is ready to work. The challenge for us is to figure out how to find the right job, along with the right types of supports needed to assist the person being successful in their career choice.
- Currently the best practice service providers are those that offer support services based on what the person states they need and want. Person Centered Planning or Career Planning

focuses on the individual as the primary customer and services are created for that individual and respond to his/her needs and expectations. It starts with our attempts to understand, get to know a person, and support them in what they want to do rather than what we think they should do, or what we currently have available.

- Career planning including job/career exploration will occur to help ensure informed choice and action steps designed to achieve desired outcomes.
- The support team will help maintain and encourage existing and new relationships and help to locate natural supports within the community and work place.

### **Person Centered Career Planning Raising the Expectations**

Career Planning is;

- a lifelong process, which includes choosing an occupation, getting a job, growing in our job, possibly changing careers, and eventually retiring.
- the Career Planning process offers information in all these areas.
- this may happen once in our lifetimes, but it is more likely to happen several times as we first define and then redefine ourselves and our goals.

Career Planning starts with getting to know the “Person” or the person getting to know themselves.

It is also critical that those who know the person best from all settings participate in the planning process. Assist the job seeker to develop a strong support network, individuals who know the job seeker well, who are well connected to the business community and who are committed to assisting the job seeker in their career pursuit.

When individuals assume ownership of decisions regarding their employment, agency personnel are placed in the role of providing advice, technical support and consultation  
When facilitating during the career planning the facilitator needs to remember:

- The focus is on the job seeker.
- Supporters are invited by the job seeker.
- It’s about the job seekers conditions, preferences and contributions for employment.
- It’s about networking.
- It’s a process focusing on planning, setting action steps, assigning responsible persons and taking action.

Career planning should be a purposeful, organized and outcome-oriented process designed to ensure the person’s quality of life. It is very important to begin early to allow time for planning

the supports and services needed for the future. It creates a framework for job exploration and job searching.

Additional tools and resources on career planning may be found at:

[Your Regional Office Employment Coordinator](#)

[The Missouri Planning Council Career Discovery Guide](#)

[Job Accommodation Network](#)

[Office of Disability Employment Policy](#)

#### **Support Coordinator Roles/Responsibilities:**

Support coordinators need to be involved in planning and monitoring of services to help ensure that employment and employment services are continuing to meet the individual's needs in order for them to be successful. **Employment is the first and preferred service to be explored prior to any other day services option.** Support coordinators should be aware of the variety of employment alternatives – including those outside of typical employment services (e.g. self employment).

- A. Meet with the individual/family to assure the Individual Service Plan (ISP) addresses the needs/desires for employment, and necessary supports. The support coordinator should consult with the regional office employment resource and transition coordinator as necessary.
- B. Assist the individual to develop a Career Plan that outlines in detail what needs to happen next.
- C. Complete referral for employment through all available community integrated employment services such as Vocational Rehabilitation, area career centers and if necessary through waiver services.
- D. Once all available funding sources have been identified in regards to employment services, a planning meeting will be facilitated by the support coordinator or another member of the support team designated by the job seeker to discuss needs and supports to **ensure employment outcomes are being met.**
- E. Work with individual/family to follow up on outcomes identified in the planning meeting and discuss relevant issues;
  - Who are the various employment providers
  - what does the employment service provider offer

- can and should self-directed services be explored
- are other non-traditional employment alternatives a better fit for the individual (e.g. self – employment)
- what are the transportation options and available funding
- are job adaptations needed including communication assistive technology
- any medical concerns that need to be considered while on the job
- scheduling of work hours
- what are the natural supports available
- are supports while at work needed long term, intermittently or for a shorter period of time..what is the plan to fade supports if paid supports are provided

F. Through regular monitoring of the ISP, determine if the job offered/accepted matches the job seekers identified employment goal. In other words is the job found what the person said they wanted/needed? Is it a good job match? If not, the planning team should reconvene to address and resolve the issues.

G. Accurate employment outcome data is one key element in states that have been successful in improving employment outcomes for individuals who receive Medicaid funded supports (Hall et. al, 2007). At Planning and plan review meetings support coordinators should assist with data collection by:

- ▶ Being familiar with the CIMOR employment Screens and collecting information to complete CIMOR employment screen fields.
- ▶ Asking about work / wages
- ▶ Complete Screens in CIMOR
- ▶ Verifying the information at quarterly meetings

This activity is billable as part of the planning process and ISP documentation. Your regional office employment coordinator is available if you have questions.

If you need additional assistance in assisting the individual in developing a career plan contact your local Employment Resource and Transition Coordinator or the Director of Employment & Training.

Thank you for your support as it relates to supporting Individuals with disabilities to gain and maintain employment!